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Lt. Cmdr. Heather Shibley helps our nation's warfighters and families with psychological wounds.

By Lt. Cmdr. Heather Shibley, department head of mental health, Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune

I have always had a deep respect for active duty service members. During my residency, I worked in a VA medical facility and performed a rotation at the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress which allowed me to spend some time at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center as part of the consult liaison team rounding on med evacuated service members.

There is no more honorable or more rewarding job than taking care of our warfighters and their families. My first tour was at Camp Pendleton from which I deployed to the Role 3 Combat Hospital in Kandahar, Afghanistan. I would go from performing live-sustaining measures on the flight line to doing grief and trauma work in the trauma bay. One part of my mission there was to ensure the psychological health of the medical staff due to the graphic exposures to severe injuries and death.

I have been lucky enough to work with EOD Wounded Warriors and Marine Corps Forces Special Operations teams, at both Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune. These Marines are selfless. Many of their buddies have made the ultimate sacrifice. Many suffer from multiple traumatic brain injuries and PTSD but they are whole heartedly resilient and as we break through the stigma we are able to make a profound impact on their recovery. Allowing these service members to process through their delayed grief reactions, the [moral injury](#), the impact of their operational tempo and what this country is asking of them, allows for a stronger Marine Corps and a stronger Navy.

I'm currently the department head of NH [Camp Lejeune's Mental Health Department](#), overseeing a staff of almost 100 clinicians and support staff across three clinics. We developed the NH Camp Lejeune Crisis Response Team which strives to mitigate potential negative outcomes after an unexpected death or mass casualty. We are focused on providing evidence based trauma psychotherapy. I'm also privileged to work on the Marine Logistics Group suicide prevention working group to decrease suicides, to ensure appropriate communication with line officers and improve operational readiness.

There is no better job in the world....I feel like it is in my blood...like I was born to do this. Every day I feel lucky to work alongside our service members. My job is easy. What they do is hard.

I'm Lt. Cmdr. Heather Shibley. I am Navy Medicine.

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